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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 ACDA-12 HA-05 TRSE-00 EB-08 OMB-01
/115 W
----------043569 111310Z /45
P R 111105Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5979
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
US MISSION USBERLIN 1900
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PRAGUE 2142

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, CZ
SUBJECT: 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF CZECHOSLOVAK INVASION - CURRENT
DEVELOPMENTS

REF.: PRAGUE 1911

1. SUMMARY: WITH THE ANNIVERSARY OF 1968 SOVIET INTERVENTION
LESS THAN TEN DAYS AWAY, THE MOST PROMINENT VISIBLE SIGN THAT
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CZECHOSLOVAKS ARE AWARE OF IT IS IN FREQUENT REFERENCES TO
1968 EVENTS IN REGIME PROPAGANDA. DISSIDENT ACTIVITY APPEARS
TO BE CONFINED TO PREPARING STATEMENTS FOR RELEASE AND REVIVING
UNDERGROUND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES. END SUMMARY.

2. ACTIVITIES OF CHARTER 77 SUPPORTERS. IT STILL
APPEARS AS IF THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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ACTIVISTS IN MARKING THE 10 ANNIVERSARY WILL BE
ISSUANCE OF DECLARATIONS REAFFIRMING FIDELITXITO CALLS
FOR GREATER FREEDOM THAT DISTINGUISHED THE 1968 DUBCEK
REGIME. THE DECLARATION STEMMING FROM RECENT MEETING
OF CHARTER 77 AND POLISH HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS NEAR
THE CSSR-POLISH BORDER IS A CASE IN POINT (PRAGUE 2096).
BUT PERHAPS MOST INTERESTING EVENT THIS WEEK HAS BEEN
COMMENCEMENT OF SO-CALLED "LIVING ROOM THEATRE" PRO-
DUCTION OF THE SHAKESPEARE CLASSIC MACBETH, ORGANIZED
BY PLAYWRIGHT PAVEL KOHOUT AND STARRING PAVEL LANDOVSKY
AND VLASTA CHRAMOSTOVA -- ALL OF WHOM ARE DENIED THE
POSSIBILITY OF OPENLY PURSUING THEIR PROFESSIONS AS A
RESULT OF IDENTIFICATION WITH 1968 REFORMS AND CHARTER 77.
ON AUGUST 7 AND 8, "REHEARSALS" OF THE PLAY TOOK PLACE
IN APARTMENTS OF CHARTER SUPPORTERS. EMBASSY P&C ADMIN.
SECRETARY AND WIFE OF PAO ATTENDED FIRST SESSION; DCM
AND WIFE ATTENDED THE SECOND. IN BOTH CASES, THEY WERE
ONLY NON-CZECHOSLOVAKS INVITED. KOHOUT TOLD DCM THOSE
INVOLVED IN THE PLAY WERE TRYING TO CONTINUE THEIR
PROFESSIONS IN THIS WAY DESPITE EFFORTS OF THE REGIME
TO DENY THEM WORK OPPORTUNITIES. KOHOUT ADDED THAT THERE
WOULD BE NO MORE PERFORMANCES LIKE THESE UNTIL AFTER
10TH ANNIVERSARY. IN SEPTEMBER, HE EXPECTS SUCH
LIVING ROOM PERFORMANCES TO OCCUR ON A MORE OR LESS
REGULAR BASIS. MEANWHILE, AS EMBASSY HAD EXPECTED
(REFTEL HE AND OTHER CHARTER 77 PROPONENTS PLAN TO
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DEPART PRAGUE THIS WEEK TO REMAIN IN COUNTRY HOMES
UNTIL THE END OF THE MONTH.

3. REGIME PREPARATIONS. THE HUSAK REGIME APPEARS TO
BE APPROACHING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY WITH INCREASED
CONFIDENCE OF BEING ABLE TO COPE WITH ANY CONTINGENCY
THAT MAY ARISE. ACCENT IS ON BUSINESS AS USUAL, WITH
MAJOR ATTENTION AT THE MOMENT TO FORMAL OPENING OF NEW
PRAGUE METRO LINES ON AUGUST 12. ON THE OTHER HAND,
WE HEAR SECURITY FORCES HAVE BEEN PUT ON ALERT UNTIL THE
END OF THE MONTH. EFFORTS ARE GOING FORWARD TO ENSURE
THAT CHARTER 77 PERSONALITIES WILL BE GENERALLY DISPERSED
ON AUGUST 20-21. AND MFA IS TIGHTENING VISA CONTROLS,
PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO NON-ACCREDITED FOREIGN JOURNA-
LISTS, WHO WILL PROBABLY BE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN HERE FOR
REMAINDER OF AUGUST. AUSTRIAN DCM KARAS SAY 3 AUSTRIAN
CORRESPONDENTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN REFUSED ENTRY TO COVER
THE ANNIVERSARY. NY TIMES CORRESPONDENT ANDELMAN, WHO
IS ACCREDITED HERE, HAS JUST ARRIVED FROM BELGRADE BUT
HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO RETUN THERE UNTIL NEW YORK STRIKE
SITUATION IS CLARIFIED. TIME MAGAZINE STRINGER STICHOVA
TELLS US EE CORRESPONDENT AIKMAN, ALSO ACCREDITED HERE,

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IS EXPECTED TO BE IN PRAGUE NEXT WEEK AND MAY PREPARE
A COVER STORY ON THE ANNIVERSARY.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PRAGUE 2142

4. MEDIA COVERAGE MEANWHILE FOCUSES ON CAMPAIGN TO
DENIGRATE ALL ASPECTS OF 1968 POLICIES, EXCEPT THE
JANUARY CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM (AT WHICH DUBCEK
REPLACED NOVOTNY) AND REPEAT SHRILL ACCUSATIONS AGAINST
THE MAIN ACTORS IN PRAGUE SPRING. RUDE PROVA TENDS TO
CONCENTRATE CURRENTLY ON ALLEGED DAMAGE TO THE ECONOMY
WHICH RESULTED IN 1968-69 FROM THE SIK REFORMS AND TO
PRAISE SUBSEQUENT POLICY FOLLOWED UNDER THE HUSAK REGIME,
WHICH HAS BROUGHT CZECHOSLOVAKIA TO ITS PRESENT SUPPOSEDLY
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ENVIABLE STATE OF PROSPERITY AND STABILITY. WEEKLY PARTY PRESS HAS MOVED INCREASINGLY FROM ATTACKS ON PRO-REFORM INDIVIDUALS AND ORGAINZATIONS TO ACCUSATIONS THAT 1968 REFORMS WERE STIMULATED AND SUPPORTED BY THE WEST IN HOPES OF BREAKING CZECHOSLOVAKIA AWAY FROM ITS ALLIES; HERMAN KAHN, HENRY KISSINGER AND ZBIGNIEW BRE-ZINSKI ARE CITED AS CHIEF PROPONENTS OF THIS STRATEGY. THESE LATTER PIECES ARE EXTENDED VERSIONS OF NOTE-WORTHY YURI ZHUKOV COMMENTARY THAT APPEARED IN MOSCOW PRAVDA AND WAS REPRINTED HERE AUGUST 8, SHOWING SOVIET APPROVAL AND PROBABLY CLOSE COORDINATION OF THIS LINE.
COMMENT: WHILE THE REGIME TAKES ITS PRECAUTIONS, THE CZECH MASSES SEEM TO BE PAYING SCANT ATTENTION TO THE APPROACHING ANNIVERSARY. PRAGUE'S WENCELAS SQUARE, MOST LIKELY SITE FOR ANY PROTEST MANIFESTATION, IS THRONGED WITH TOURISTS AND SHOPPERS, BUT SO FAR REVEALS NO SIGN OF ANY SPECIAL SECURITY PRECAUTIONS. IN SPITE OF RUMORS OF RECENT EXPLOSIONS AT PARTY BUILDINGS IN BRATISLAVA, NEITHER WE NOR OUR NATO COLLEAGUES HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FIND ANY SIGNIFICANT EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT AUGUST 20-21 WILL PASS OTHER THAN QUIETLY. WE THINK OUR FRG COLLEAGUE IS PROBABLY CORRECT IN HIS EXPECTATION THAT THE REGIME WILL FORMALLY GREET THE ANNIVERSARY, BUT HAVE NO CLUE YET AS TO THE PRECISE FORM THIS WILL TAKE.
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